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## Flirtation with Autobiography

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*Jonathan A. Freedman*  
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In January of 1997, near a beach in Santa Barbara, CSR Editor David Watts took me aside and asked me to write my sociological autobiography. Length and approach were my choice. In June of 1997, a consulting firm with which I am affiliated asked me to prepare an autobiographical presentation for a group of consultants—five minutes and one transparency, “a minute a decade”. These assignments have given me an opportunity to review my life. It is a humbling experience to explore the milestones as well as the nooks and crannies. I will try to present self—achievements, problems, prospects—in a way that is meaningful to others. This will neither be the ultimate ego trip (legend in his own mind) nor the unabridged edition. However, it will have more substance than the short biographical statement or resumé that forms the basis for introductions.

Length is a major determinant. If you only had one word at your disposal, what would that word be? The Internal Revenue Service asks for one word. Four words over a lifetime grace their tax returns—student, educator, administrator, consultant—a career pathway. Perhaps add one more—retired—and we have a life. Are these words I would freely choose? This is self-definition within the government categories. Perhaps there is an official file somewhere with other definitions. W.H. Auden’s poem, “The Unknown Citizen,” comes to mind. Recently, a new acquaintance watched me in action and dubbed me “Sparky,” because my energy always seems to be sparking something. I like that nickname, but is it dignified enough for a journal? I might choose “generator,” because a lot of energy has gone into generation of creative approaches. At other times, in less flattering moments, I’d try “procrastinator” on for size—all those incompletes—academic and otherwise. I’m sure others have dubbed me with flattering and unflattering one-word descriptions. I’m sure one or more will come to mind at the end of your

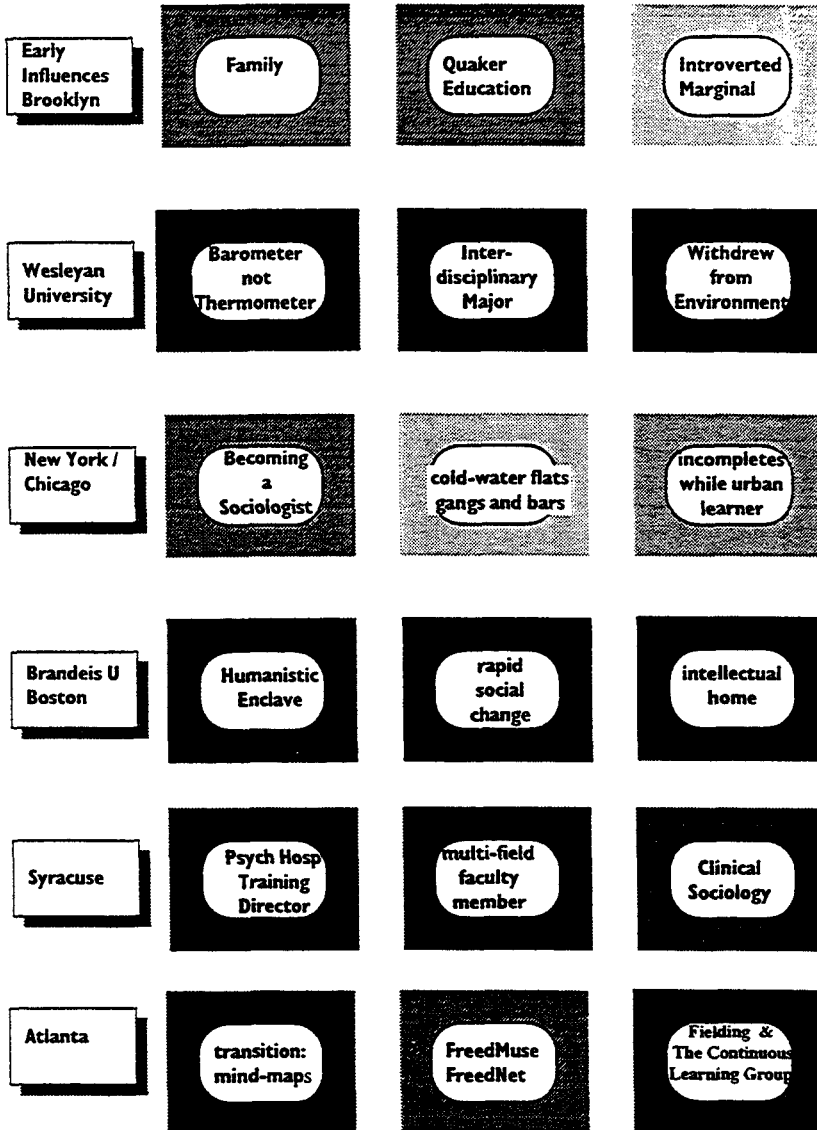
reading of this essay if you digest it all or find it not to your taste.

Short phrases have been applied to me over the years. "Making the Impossible Possible" and "Bringing Light to Dark Places" are two that summarize. There certainly have been projects that reflect these phrases. On the other hand, I worked as a middle manager in a very large bureaucracy for twenty-two years. Many hours over those years were spent doing the bureaucratic dance. While there has been some risk in my activities, there has almost always been a safety net—resources to provide an escape route.

Resumés are short career statements controlled by the author. I am including how I present myself at that level in an appendix. There is a standard one-pager, a supplementary statement of qualities, and a right brain resumé. Why so many? The latter two are responses to my move out of the comfort zone of Central New York to the New South and my need to reestablish a public identity. How do I distinguish myself from the myriad of other applicants for positions? In retrospect, these appear to be more useful for my growth than to impress the faceless resumé reviewers. However, they have been useful follow-ups once contact has been established. Resumés contain traditional milestones—self-advertisements without criticism.

The five minute autobiographical statement is more balanced. Here is the overview that organized my life for the consulting firm's "show and tell." For this "flirtation with autobiography," I will use these boxes and try to limit myself to one long paragraph per box to keep from getting carried away with detail. Therefore, I am providing glimpses of a life with an emphasis on its links with sociology. I am leaving out much, but especially acknowledgements of the special contributions of family, friends, colleagues, co-workers, students, and clients.

## Jonathan Freedman Career



### Early Influences — Brooklyn

When I was born on February 13, 1936, almost my entire family lived within one square mile in Brooklyn. Now we're scattered with clusters in Atlanta, Baltimore, Jerusalem, New York City, Syracuse, Massachusetts, San Francisco, and Chicago/Iowa. Two of the next generation have returned to Brooklyn. My father, son of a carpenter, had emigrated at an early age from Poland, and had become a very successful dentist. My mother, born in New York, was then a high school teacher of English and Hebrew—later a professor of education, poet, and author of books for children. She was the daughter of a Russian immigrant lawyer who co-founded the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Association (HIAS). Early memories include:

- having food and other basic needs delivered on a strict schedule—a child-rearing practice in fashion at that time;
- open house Sabbath and festival dinners with my grandmother the chief organizer;
- fund-raising benefits for refugee relief that took place in our house;
- special eldest son status in a large circle of family and friends;
- delight in Brooklyn: The Prospect Park Zoo and Lake, biking to Coney Island, the Dodgers, and the Grand Army Plaza Public Library.

I attended Brooklyn Friends School from kindergarten through high school. This meant that ninety minutes a day were spent on a school bus traversing Brooklyn. I still can recite the names of all my home room teachers. The themes of Quaker education bored me at the time: the weekly meditative meeting for worship, the philosophy that each person contains an inner light, that there be that of God in every person, and the seeking of consensus. However, these themes were deeply transmitted as they became guideposts later in my life. I was a mid-range student. I never got an 'A' until graduate school. Is this because I am a late bloomer or a result of grade inflation? I don't know. I do remember shocking the history teacher when I outscored his favorite student on the history portion of the Scholastic Aptitude Test. I did a lot of writing and reporting. An assignment to paraphrase the soliloquies in Hamlet garnered an 'A' from a tough teacher (and was recycled by brothers and close friends in subsequent years). A poetic eulogy to my grandfather was published in the literary magazine and in *The Family Announcer*, a newsy and literary New Year's family publication. I interviewed Gil Hodges, the Dodger first baseman on the turf of hallowed Ebbets Field. My mother became a sympathetic critic and quiet collaborator, a role which continued throughout her life. My first experience on a mental hospital ward was a high school weekend spent as a volunteer socializer at Manhattan State Hospital.

I was introverted and marginal in the school setting. Children who entered

the Friends' Class of '53 after experience in other schools were much more sophisticated (or was it aggressive). In my playroom refuge at home, I remember creating elaborate fantasy games with toy animals and anagrams—structural kingdoms that remained in place for months at a time. As a marginal to the central social action at school, I certainly got a practical education in a social structure and my place in it. I struck out a lot on the dating scene. I was an observer/participant in a social situation I did not fully understand.

Family life was something of an antidote to the school. As the eldest son, there were some important social roles that placed me reluctantly on center stage. My shy (and sly) father's idea of social gatherings was to invite hundreds of people for Passover, a Bar Mitzvah or New Year's, come home from work tired, greet guests and then withdraw, leaving my mother and me to be the hosts with support from my brothers and other family members.

### **Wesleyan University**

I discovered Wesleyan University in a high school college-choice class. Its red and black school colors catalog stood out. I visited, applied, and was accepted. Almost immediately, I came up against the fraternity system and was deemed "not the fraternity type." I joined the John Wesley Club, which in its more outrageous moments had elements of an intellectual "Animal House." I started as a pre-med and was on probation at the end of my first semester. My high school preparation was weak, especially in the sciences. So much for pre-med. I couldn't decide on a major and although interdisciplinary majors were rare at Wesleyan, one was created for me and was dubbed "social psychology." At that time, there was no sociology department at Wesleyan. I did my first fieldwork in a political science sequence, did many courses in philosophy, psychology, and anthropology, especially ethnomusicology, and talked my way into courses with professorial stars N.O. Brown on mythology and Carl Schorske in European intellectual history. I used ethnic music in working with an autistic young man at Middletown State Hospital. I spent a demanding summer with the American Friends Service Committee in the back wards of a state school for the retarded in Maine working as a ward attendant. I was the assistant tour leader for a group of French college students as they traveled through the East, South, and Midwest. I spent another summer working with newly-arrived immigrants in the HIAS residence. These experiences did not suggest a vocational goal. I was transcending the world of my childhood and learning about people and organizational structures. When I came during semester breaks to the family cooperative apartment on Manhattan's Westside, I'd take the bus downtown to explore Greenwich Village bars and jazz.

I remember late one night in my junior year looking at the campus from one of its hills. Suddenly its social structure became clear. Wesleyan President

Butterfield's stated mission was to prepare leaders for beacon communities. What was a beacon community? I suddenly saw the fraternities turned into the social and service clubs of elite suburbs or small cities. I saw my classmates being the elite "thermometers" in these safe worlds, reflecting the norms and values of that contemporary society, with their suburban houses and lifestyles. I wanted no part of that. I saw myself as a "barometer" ahead of changes. I did not know how to translate that into a career then. I did know that the Wesleyan social environment did not fit my needs. However, the Dean would not let me move off campus so I used my parent's country house which was about two hours distant at the New York end of Connecticut. I lived there alone most of my senior year, only emerging for classes which I clustered in the middle of the week when I would live in the John Wesley Club. I read, thought, and tried to be at peace with nature and the small town, but found it hard to focus. My introversion and marginality continued. My friends tended to be out of the mainstream and my shyness around women did not help in locker room bragging sessions at this all male college. I vowed to learn about women as people, not as objects. In retrospect, I delight in the close relationships I have with both women and men over the years. I am also surprised that my list of influential faculty is all male—although at the time when and in the places where I was educated at the college and graduate level, men were faculty, women were mostly associates.

### **New York/Chicago**

I graduated with my class and returned to New York with no clear plans. I lived at home, but would spend time exploring the city. I grew uncomfortable at having to pass through elevatormen and doormen on my travels. I converted a pantry into my bedroom and painted the ceiling black. One day I joined a college friend to sit at a booth at the Greenwich Village Outdoor Art Show. The City looked different from that booth. The uptown world of tourists were strolling by and I was a Village insider watching them. Cool! My friend told me that an apartment was available two doors down from his—a flat for \$21 a month—no heat or hot water, with the toilet in the hallway. Cool, Cool! I left the protection of the family apartment and moved to the Lower Eastside using money left over from college. My family had started out as immigrants in the United States not too far from my new location. My younger brother had dropped out of Swarthmore and found his own coldwater flat in Hell's Kitchen. My father was particularly upset. He really had tried to protect us from the world of poverty and now we chose to leave affluence to learn about that world. Of course, their resources were still available and I could always leave. He suggested that if this lifestyle was what I wanted to explore, then I should do it in another city.

I began to explore New York City in earnest. I walked and walked and

walked. I found bars were great places to dialogue with people and I became accepted as a young regular at McSorley's Ale House—the oldest tavern in New York, populated then by pensioners who lived in inexpensive housing around the Bowery. I also hung out at The White Horse Tavern, Dylan Thomas's bar filled with West Village art types, and Ann's, a First Avenue truckers' bar. I would end evenings at The Five Spot where an unknown pianist, Thelonius Monk, was moving jazz forward. I substituted at a street corner newsstand for a friend and learned the value of a penny. I found work as an assistant editor of an audio-visual magazine owned by a family friend (I only found out a few years ago that my mother was subsidizing my \$50 a week salary). The job became problematic in the Fall. I was ready to go back to school, but wanted to continue with interdisciplinary work. I remembered that the University of Chicago had several interdisciplinary committees. The catalog description of the Committee on Communication stated its goal was to integrate the social sciences and it had an impressive faculty. I was admitted and began at UC in January 1959.

Once in Chicago, I found I had made two major miscalculations: The Committee on Communication was in decline. Most of the names in the catalog were no longer involved. Also, I thought the distances between blocks were the same as in Manhattan. I found another coldwater flat, unfortunately discovered it was a forty-five minute walk from the University, but fortunately right on the suburban train line. I continued to learn from my neighbors. I finally found a faculty member who shared my learning style. Professor Kermit Eby, a Church of the Brethren Minister and the former Director of Education and Training for the CIO, had been brought to the University by Robert Hutchins to train intelligentsia both for the labor movement and for faculty for junior colleges. Kermit Eby was a very spiritual man, an ethicist, and a pragmatist. He also connected me with others who became major links in my development. One of these was Reverend Bill Baird, a stubborn Socialist Congregational Minister who was going to stay and maintain his church even as the congregation engaged in "white flight." I became the Youth Director of the church for a while. This experience led me to working with gangs. I became a participant-observer for the Youth Studies Program studying gangs under James F. Short of the Sociology faculty. Other special friends were an interracial couple battling northern segregation, Sol and Eileen Ice, who had backgrounds in the Steel Workers Union, youth work, politics, and community organization. Later, when Sol became an organizer with Saul Alinsky, our apartment was an after-hours refuge for the community organizers of the Industrial Areas Foundation, as they organized Woodlawn. I was a minor delegate to The Woodlawn Organization's founding convention. I also courted Jo Ann Sanders who became my wife and with whom I continue a journey of thirty-eight years and counting. My shyness and marginality



disappeared. I had found people and groups willing to have me as a significant other. I also took my first sociology courses, but specialized in incompletes. I was not pleased with much of the education I was getting. I was expected to agree with, not to challenge the great men of the University. I would spend long hours in the library examining some of the ideas they promulgated, and found alternative explanations to which they were not open to hearing (except for Kermit Eby and Jim Short). Catch 22—Submit a critical paper, get a bad grade. Incompletes were a safer option. There was also the Selective Service System to contend with and that would preserve a 2S deferment. Finally, I gave that up, went through the army physical evaluation after driving all night from Chicago, and flunked it.

### Brandeis University

One evening, upon emerging from the stacks of the University of Chicago library, a sociology graduate student described a seminar given by a visiting faculty member which had enraged the sociology faculty. I found out that the provocateur was Professor Maurice Stein of Brandeis University who had just written a book, *The Eclipse of Community*. I was the first reader of the book when it arrived at the library. It was the first book in sociology that spoke directly to me and my concerns. I found that Brandeis had just started a graduate department in sociology and that Everett Hughes, the most humanistic of the UC sociology faculty, was leaving to join Brandeis. The funding for the Youth Studies Program was ending. After some procrastination, I applied to Brandeis and wrote a strong letter detailing what I wanted to learn and inviting them to reject me if they couldn't provide that. They accepted me and I arrived in 1963.

There, I found a humanistic enclave. I came in out of the shadows and learned so much, especially how to analyze my experiences through a variety of lenses. I only took sociology courses, but it was an education in the liberal arts. I studied with Everett Hughes, Morrie Schwartz, Vic Walter, Kurt Wolff, Jack Seeley, Maury Stein, and others, on topics from sociology of literature, theory, power, occupations, community, participant observation, and social causation. Herbert Marcuse's lectures stimulated me to examine society from a radical perspective. There were also a marvelous group of graduate and undergraduate students active in civil rights and social change. I marched with King in Boston (playing it safe), dialogued with SNCC organizers, heard Malcolm X, and enjoyed the rich intellectual life of Boston. We reverse-integrated a new middle class church-sponsored row-house development in Roxbury. I took field notes on the experience. Everett Hughes sent me on a field trip to Syracuse University where faculty had chained themselves to a fence in front of the local power company as a civil rights protest. I saw a university unlike any I had attended, with power the name of

the game, where my moves were traced by student spies.

I continued to have difficulty figuring out a topic for the dissertation. Robert Weiss described coordinated sub-studies. Perhaps these torrent of social change events could be combined, but how? I noted that situations were changing so fast, and analysis took so long that the results were outdated. I focused on how to do sociology under rapid change conditions. Life was so rich. "Don't let your studies get in the way of your education!" was a watchcry from Wesleyan that applied now. The dissertation would take years to complete.

## Syracuse

The Community Action Training Center (CATC) was an initiative of the federal War on Poverty to train community organizers for low-income communities in the Alinsky manner. He was to be a consultant to the program. While in Chicago, I saw him and his organizers as puppeteers pulling on just the right community strings to bring power to the poor through change tactics. Here, in 1965, was a chance to research an organizing effort. The project was linked to Syracuse University. Here was an opportunity to learn firsthand about two earlier fascinations. With blinders on, I signed on as a researcher (and soon became coordinator of the research effort) and insisted on some faculty status at the university. What a powerful negative learning experience! I was purged by CATC after six months. Some key experiences:

- negotiating with the research staff for return of the research data which they had taken to accentuate demands for better treatment of themselves and better security for the data;
- learning to deal with an amazing group of project leaders, each with his own affectation;
- being scapegoated, and surviving two death threats;
- on a more positive note, training a group of participant-observers, getting a chance to do one-on-one interviews with Saul Alinsky, and secretly writing a detailed career-saving document that documented the ineffective internal operations of the Center.

I was appointed a lecturer at the School of Social Work. I taught my first class in Social Science Concepts while in the midst of CATC. I used *Mass Society in Crisis*. The course and the text influenced many of its students, and those with whom I'm still in touch refer to that experience as a highpoint of their social work education. This was my first experience both with adult education and with designing and delivering a class. I remained with the School of Social Work until 1971, teaching and supervising theses. On the side, I took the lead in establishing BYUS—Black Youth United of Syracuse—a youth center that took over a city church. I liberated one of the

School of Social Work's buildings and turned it into a crisis counseling center during the national student strike against the Vietnamese War. I also revisited my interest in institutions for the mentally ill and retarded, working on a design for community outreach centers for Syracuse Psychiatric Hospital. I trained institutional observers with Burton Blatt, an activity which evolved into the Center for Human Policy. This was a time of turmoil and hope in our society. For a while, during the exuberance of the student strike, it looked like the old order was crumbling. My change-oriented confrontational style did not endear me to academic administrators, and my dissertation continued to evolve without completion. Therefore, when I announced to the Dean of the School of Social Work that I was planning to leave at the end of the year, he proceeded to fire me.

A career style had evolved out of the mix of academic and community activities. I saw myself as having one foot in the university and one in the community—groups that were frequently at odds. In retrospect, this bifurcated career style evolved from dealing with discord to creating harmony by joining the world of scholarship and the world of the larger society—sometimes joining individuals—sometimes joining communities of interest. This antecedent to this pattern reaches back into my adolescence and this pattern continues today with only a few breaks.

With the next move from Syracuse University to Hutchings Psychiatric Center in February 1971, my university/community combination broke down for two years. In retrospect I crossed an invisible line. My job responsibility was to build an education and training center for a brand new facility and to take part in the design and development of a comprehensive state facility that would combine service, research, and training. The prospect was so exciting that I turned down academic jobs to give this a try. I believed I could make a creative contribution. I would evaluate my contribution every six months for the first seven years. I wasn't sure someone with my background really belonged in the setting. I stayed for twenty-two years so the fit evolved. Achievements included:

- developing a high performing training team which coordinated or provided a rather comprehensive program for all levels of hospital staff;
- designing and delivering training for new jobs before the jobs were created;
- linking one hospital with academic programs from the associate through masters level—a forerunner of the corporate university;
- designing workshops or bringing unusual programs to the hospital—Mime, Reevaluation Counseling, Technologies for Creating;
- creating and maintaining a humanistic enclave within a rule-driven setting.

The Education and Training Department was considered the best in the state and its dedicated staff were able to continue a high level of performance much of the time. In 1973, I was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the Health Sciences Center. A few years later, I became adjunct faculty of the Department of Sociology at Syracuse University, teaching social problems and similar courses. I also became a part-time mentor for Empire State College, a university without walls, and adjunct for several branch campuses. I found I loved to teach and to design curriculum wherever it took place. The Office of Mental Health of the State of New York was one of the largest bureaucracies in the world. I learned how to survive within that system while trying to bring about change. Hutchings never got to the staffing levels needed for the full service, research, training center because of changes in the philosophy of service delivery and the advent of managed care. In the last three years of my tenure at the psychiatric center (1990-93), I became a special assistant to the executive director around issues of organizational change dealing with the effects of downsizing on a staff — many of whom still maintained the dream of the comprehensive facility.

I did not view myself as a clinician. Therefore, I was surprised in 1977 to find that I was scheduled to do clinical staffings. These were weekly events in which guest experts from within the Center were asked to review the treatment team's approach to a difficult patient. I asked the Clinical Director why had I been chosen. He replied that members of the treatment teams had grown tired of just hearing from psychiatrists and wanted to hear from some new blood teamed with psychiatrists. I was not sure what I would bring to the session, but would go to the team's location and review the case record the day before the staffing and try to construct a social and treatment history. The typical session would have the psychiatrist take the lead and I would have ten minutes at the end. I would usually make some practical treatment suggestions; and frequently when these were followed, there were some positive change. I began to build a clinical reputation. I analyzed where my ideas were coming from and discovered they were a mix of sociology and Reevaluation Counseling, a self-help movement in which I had become a co-counselor and teacher. I began testing the approach as a co-therapist on very difficult cases and had some promising results.

With the move to mental health work, I had given up an identity as a sociologist. Yet I would go to the American Sociological Association whenever its national meetings rotated back to New York City. I would see old friends, but be dismayed at the content of most of the sessions I attended. I did notice at the 1976 meeting an announcement of an unofficial gathering on clinical sociology at 4 PM on the last day of the meeting. I found a group of eight meeting in an upstairs lobby. We described our work. As far as members of this group knew, I was the only sociologist in the country doing clinical

work in a psychiatric setting. They requested that I write an article.

This was easier said than done. Ever since my writing was torn to shreds by my professor in Freshman English, I had blocked on scholarly writing. I had no need to write for academic rank having become tenured in the mental health system. Yet here was an approach that made a difference. I began thinking about an article. However, the old fear of being attacked made the writing tortuous. Then Barry Glassner came to the Syracuse University Sociology Department with some parallel interests. The article first turned into a monograph and then into our collaboration, *Clinical Sociology*, the first textbook in a field that did not yet exist (although there were glimpses of a heritage decades earlier). The text, designed for upper division undergraduates, presents theory, methods, features of the social landscape, and sociologically-based technologies. The book, caught in the midst of editor/publisher warfare, as well as being different from the usual text, did not sell well and has been out-of-print for years. We talk from time-to-time about a new edition, but it is not a priority for either of us.

The Clinical Sociology Association evolved, although I was not a charter member. I did become active as the program chair of the first freestanding conference and several that followed, then executive officer, and then president. I am proudest of that first conference at Stella Niagara, north of Niagara Falls. Some attendees of that conference are still active in the association. I was trying to be a leader of the association while working full-time, teaching, volunteering in the community, and helping to raise three sons. My life was cluttered, but rich.

A group of inmates were introduced to parts of *Clinical Sociology* in manuscript by a graduate student teaching sociology to inmates at Auburn Correctional Facility. They began to use the chapter on sociodrama in working with delinquent youth who were brought to the prison by their counselors to experience several hours of prison life. The inmates requested that one of the authors of the book come to the prison to make sure they were using the technique correctly. I went into the prison and was impressed with the dedication of the YAP inmate-volunteers. This began a ten-year commitment to doing work with the inmates, usually as a volunteer. I did get paid to teach a criminology course which I linked with an adult education class at Syracuse University. The class ended with a joint seminar in the prison. Later, I would teach Technologies for Creating, a self-help course in this setting. Inmates, and a group of outside volunteer consultants, worked on developing a course to lower recidivism, *Prepare for Freedom*, using a clinical sociology model. We found that the bright inmates with whom we were working could not tell us the rules underlying prison culture. The first part of the course sensitized them to prison culture with much of the writing done by inmates. Then I wrote a long poem entitled "Moving Gently Toward the Truth" to aid in thinking

about transition to entrepreneurial culture on the outside. When I would read the poem in the prison, you could hear a pin drop. Inmates thought the poem captured the essence of their world. The poem provides a strategy in moving to a new culture.

### **Moving Gently Toward the Truth**

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There are different ways to distinguish the flow of life in the universe.  
 Each is seen as a fixed measure, yet each is a way we choose to create order out of the way we see the world.  
 There is distance with measures such as millimeters, inches, miles, leagues, light years  
 There is enclosed space with measures such as size, quarts, acres, cubic feet  
 There is time with measures such as minutes, hours, days, years, decades, centuries  
 There is achievement with measures of degrees, jobs, awards, and rewards  
 There is punishment with measures of sentences, detentions, fines, and spankings  
 There is affiliation with measures of friendship, memberships, relationships,  
 There is power with measures of conquests  
 There is health with measures of wellness, illness, the vital statistics of life and death  
 Are there others ways to distinguish the flow of life?

### **Time**

In prison, one measure predominates—time  
 In this society, time is usually how we measure punishment  
 (However, remember the death sentence)  
 sixty seconds to the minute  
 sixty minutes to the hour  
 twenty-four hours in the day  
 seven days to the week  
 fifty-two weeks to the year.

Serving a ten year minimum sentence is approximately  
 five hundred and twenty weeks  
 one hundred and twenty months  
 Three thousand, six hundred and fifty-two days  
 Eighty-seven thousand, six hundred and forty-eight hours  
 five million, two hundred and fifty-eight thousand eight hundred and eighty minutes  
 three hundred and fifteen million five hundred and thirty-two thousand, eight hundred seconds.

How long did the act take that brought you here?  
 Some contrast!  
 So much time to think about the route you took to get here.  
 These numbers by themselves mean little. It is an arbitrary measure to mark a flow of life.  
 People place meaning in those numbers

What does a ten year sentence mean to you?

To others in the prison?

To the judge who sentenced you?

To your family?

To your friends?

To taxpayers?

To your victim?

To their family and friends?

What does "doing life" mean?

You are "doing life" now. We are all "doing life". We are what we live.

This time of your life can be full or empty, short or long, pleasurable or painful, fun or boring

Time can be on your side or against you.

For many inmates, time is the enemy that puts their life on hold

For others, time has become an ally that has aided them to prepare for the future.

Yet time passes. It is passing now as you read this. It passes every moment.

Is it possible in the prison world where time is a main measure, to have it recede into the background and to have other measures become the yardstick?

Some measure life by accomplishments. Lists of achievements de-emphasize the time that completion took

Some measure life by affiliations counting the friendships maintained over lengthy periods of time.

What would it take?

You can't just will time away or ignore it.

It will still be there both in the short run and the long run.

We know it will pass.

How will it pass for you? Hard time? Easy time? Wasted time? Useful time?

How would you like it to pass?

It is UP TO YOU!

## Space

How large is a cell?

What are the dimensions of the yard, the mess hall, the place where you work?

What space is yours? What belongs to others?

Space seems limited in prison.

You have been taken away from the more open spaces of city, town, or countryside confined because of something you did (or that others believe you did).

Kept behind a barrier, kept in limited space.

How many steps from one end of your cell to the other?

How many times have you paced this distance?  
 Pace, pace, pace, pace, turn, pace, pace, pace, pace, turn  
 How many paces in a year?  
 How big is your pace-space?

What space do you see when you look out?  
 Most prisons are designed to face inward  
 To provide limited vistas of the outside world  
 To replace its colors and actions with blandness and regimentation.  
 Dullness saps the mind of its ability to create change.

Yet there is inner space—the space of the imagination—the space of dreams  
 of fears, of thoughts.  
 Imagine your favorite place in all the world.  
 What do you see, what do you hear, what do you smell, touch, taste?

Return to the scene of your crime.  
 What do you see, what do you hear, what do you smell, touch, taste?

Imagine a space in which you are free  
 What do you see, what do you hear, what do you smell, touch, taste?

You are standing before the judge being sentenced.  
 Think about that space and your feelings at that moment  
 If you could exchange that space and that time for another  
 What would be your exchange?

Now close your eyes and think of your favorite place, the scene of your crime, a place  
 of freedom, being sentenced, your cell, a place of freedom.

Imagination opens possibilities.  
 However, think about your current situation  
 You are in a prison, surrounded by tight space and defined time.  
 What exchanges are possible?  
 Can I move from inner space—the space of my mind  
 to a better way of living in the space in which I find myself  
 Can I prepare for the outer space of my future?

It is up to you!

### Objects

For some, the goal of life is to gain the most objects.  
 A bumper sticker proclaims  
 “He who dies with the most toys wins”  
 As you grow older, the toys get more expensive.  
 Fueled by advertising, one's purchases can move beyond necessity, to niceties, to  
 luxuries, to absurdities.



The five thousand dollar car performs the same basic functions as the seventy-five thousand dollar car.

The difference is status.

The objects we collect provide the symbols of personal status.

Their names provide a statement of who I am.

What can you tell about these people by just knowing four objects?

A BMW Car; Gucci Shoes; Hart, Schaffner and Marx Suit; Rolex watch.

or

a Jeep, Adidas sneakers, Levi jeans, a pocket watch

When you come to prison, the objects are limited

Yet people create status even within the limitations

Green slacks, a sweatshirt, no name sneakers, a Timex watch could be the basics,

Yet there are many variations on this theme.

Can you judge a book by its cover?

When the symbols of status are limited,

what objects distinguish your friends?

your enemies?

What objects do you really crave. still?

Which now seem like fools' gold.

What do these objects mean to you?

Who are you? Describe yourself in relationship to the objects you crave.

Who would you like to be? What are the symbols that you want to be you?

Consider your future life as if you were on a spaceship allowed to bring with you only those objects that are essential to your survival.

List those objects.

If you just owned those objects and no others, would you be satisfied?

It's up to you!

## People

Hello out there!

Does anyone really care?

Criminals leave in their wake people who linked hands with them if only for an instant.

Some might still care. Some might still believe in you.

You touched lives. It might have been a clammy touch,  
but you touched lives.

You hurt others by what you did even if you thought you were Robin Hood or  
Eldridge Cleaver or Al Capone.

Hurting others touches lives. What you did to others that created pain is remembered  
however dimly. Face it. If you are here you have hurt others. Some you can name —  
some unnamed.

Concentrate on the faces of the persons you hurt.  
 If you don't know what they look like, give them a face  
 See their pain and admit to yourself that you caused this.

And you hurt yourself.  
 Touch your own face, run your hands across your forehead, around your eyes, your nose, your mouth, your chin.  
 Get in touch with the pain you caused yourself.  
 Here you are, in confinement not only for what you did to others,  
 but also what you did to yourself.  
 But also don't forget what people did to you.

### **Chart these actions**

What I did to others?  
 What others did to me?  
 What I did to myself?  
 Is there a balance? Is it the balance you desire?  
 Tell the truth to yourself. Face the truth!

### **Self**

Whatever the balance, you are at the tip of a precipice.  
 It might seem calm, but that is an illusion.  
 Beneath you lies your future and you can sense all the events that are part of who you are, who you were, and who you want to be.  
 A false truth, you fall off the precipice.  
 Listen to the echo  
 Who are you? (who are you?)  
 Does anybody care?  
 Think of three components making up your self.

**Your Psyche**— This monitors what's going on inside. You can listen to your inner voice passing frequent comments on how you're feeling. This self-talk can be put into the service of your aspirations

**Your Socius**—This monitors your social self—how you desire to relate to others. You can listen to an inner voice providing reactions to your interplay with others. You can train this inner voice to reflect on your interpersonal desires.

**Your Persona**—This monitors how you present yourself to others and how they view you. An inner voice here gives you feedback on how it perceives others relating to your presentation of self.

There are two dimensions to each component

an open side

a hidden side

That means:

Some aspects of you are open to you and to others

Some are open to you and hidden from others

Some are hidden from you and open to others

Some are hidden from you and hidden from others.

In areas of difficulty where there is pain, a person tries to hide this from others.

Sometimes people grow a symbolic callus around that area—a tough piece of skin that protects from pain.

Sometimes that callus becomes their persona—the way they present themselves to others—acting as tough as the pain

Sometime the pain is too deep to face, hidden first from others and then from oneself except in those few moments of extreme self-doubt.

Yet it must be faced if one is to grow beyond where one is stuck.

*You are not the only person stuck*

Various techniques are used to get a person unstuck:

**“Forget it, today is the first day of the rest of your life!”**

*Outcome:* the pain recurs from time to time and the person has limited ability to cope with it

**Shock treatment with confrontation building on the guilt**

*Outcome:* leads to lower self esteem with the reinforcement of a belief of being a shit aided by another enforcing power trips through the confessional.

**Long-term therapy during which the callus is examined from several perspectives**

*Outcome:* enforces dependency on the therapist tends to focus on the range of problems without a determination of the underlying structural patterns, and it works best with highly articulate clients and is seldom available without a catch in places like prisons.

Is there another option?

**Moving gently toward the truth,**

Coming deeply into contact with your life-spirit,

exploring the past: open side, hidden side

Acknowledging the past and its influence on the present.

Then planting the seeds for a new life and learning how to nurture those seeds so that you grow into a person worthy of your life spirit

### **Life Spirit**

Each person can be viewed as having a life spirit, an underlying self filled with the success aspirations of youth tempered by the experiences of growing up.

This life spirit can be expressed in the form of a motto  
in earlier times, a coat of arms

or through actions designed to emulate this life spirit  
 being a standup guy, getting ahead, helping others, creating, working,  
 or through meditation or prayer  
 becoming at one with an outside force  
 to link with the unknown.

Survival in prison or in any total institution and on the outside usually is aided by a  
 link to the spiritual  
 an inner voice to link to  
 to keep you on the path.  
 Morality does not die when you enter the prison gates  
 (Many outsiders don't believe this)  
 For many inmates, morality seems to get stronger  
 prison culture is simple and controlled, and penitent is the root word of penitentiary.

Temptation comes in many forms, whatever the environment

#### Choices

One can choose to respond to short-term demands  
 to temper the life spirit with temporary highs  
 The thrill of drugs, of crime  
 breaking the law for a quick fix of excitement  
 or temporary lows  
 failure, defeat, dragged out

Or one can make secondary choices leading to primary goals  
 Going to college in order to have a career later  
 Choosing not to fight another inmate in order to stay out of keeplock  
 and to stay out of keeplock in order to have  
 a good record when you go to the parole board  
 in order to get free, be free, stay free.

You have chosen to better be able to prepare for freedom and to lead a more  
 meaningful life while in prison.  
 You must back up this choice by actions and these actions must be backed up by  
 the values that come from a caring heart.

#### Heart

Coming out of prison, no matter how long the sentence is like waking up from a long  
 sleep.  
 The world you left is not the world to which you are returning  
 We live in a time of rapid change  
 with a technology that produces new and improved and  
 faster and smaller and simpler  
 cars and computers  
 weapons and watches  
 Better things for better living

But is life better?

For many communities, drug use, violence and crime are  
out-of-control

Incest, spouse, and child abuse are no longer as hidden  
Environmental issues leave people wondering whether  
those not yet born will be able to live in the planet they inherit.

Competition at all costs with the corruption that follows  
hits this society at its core  
not all crooks make it to prison.

Getting ahead at all costs means  
no respect for anyone who gets in your way.

Pushing down others to get on top.

No respect means who can one trust  
to guide me  
to be my friend.

The road is not clear, but covered with fog.

If one wants to lead a good life, one that will keep you from  
ever returning to a place like this,  
Which way do I turn?

Begin by looking outward and then turning inward.

What is a hero?

What are the qualities of heroism?

Who are your heroes? Why?

Where do you look for heroes?

Let's now look at you

Not the you filled with the noisy bravado that inflates you,  
but the reflective penitent you.

Listen and feel your heart beating.

The self that emerges has a different quality.

Reflect:

Can I become a hero?

For whom do I want to be a hero?

What would it take?

What about me would have to change?

Many heroes spend time in prison.

If not a real prison, then a symbolic one—the prison of unacceptance.

Then emerge with goals for change.

What are your goals?

For yourself?

For those you care about?

For the world?

Heroes gain pride by standing up for what they believe  
 by planting seeds in their own hearts and in the hearts of others  
 that grow into flowering trees  
 For heroes have heart  
 not only for themselves  
 but also for others  
 and for the world.  
 True heroes care  
 They get ahead with others, not at their expense.  
 And others share with them,  
 friendship and respect,  
 growth and change,  
 caring and understanding.

Heroes turn barriers into boundaries,  
 and boundaries into frontiers.

Listen to your heart  
 as you answer  
 Who are you?  
 For myself and for the world?  
 I am what I am,  
 a person moving gently toward the truth,  
 a person who has made a mistake that leads to imprisonment,  
 now considering to join in the process of becoming a hero  
 battling within the cocoon of defeat  
 to emerge as a heroic butterfly.

We were never able to complete the course. Why did I do this fifty-mile round trip so many times? I was learning a lot from the inmates, and they saw my coming as a special gift. There was also continuity with my other work on social problems and total institutions and my long-term interest in learning about people from whom I'd been protected growing up. While I usually felt safe among the inmates, I also felt the protection of a higher power as I did this work. I found this surprising as I always had problems taking the religious part of Judaism too seriously. Culturally, I am Jewish. I volunteered with Jewish organizations—president at different times of the local Hebrew Day School as well as the American Jewish Committee, Central New York branch. Because our sons were nearing Bar Mitzvah age, I was expected to spend time at worship services in the Synagogue. I frequently would use the lengthy prayer time for thinking.

During the day-long Yom Kippur service, there is a martyrology—a reminiscence of those who died horrible deaths while maintaining their steadfast belief in Judaism. The poetry and power of this section really hit home in 1978. What was the purpose in my life? I was worker and a volunteer

for groups that slowly worked for change. It was too safe. Go to work; go to meetings; talk, talk, talk. Had I become a "thermometer"? Would change happen faster if I could model more and talk less? Upon reflection on that part of the service, I came to the following question: If you knew of a contemporary holocaust and were in a position to do something to help, and did nothing, were you morally negligent? My answer was a strong "yes." I began scanning for potential locales and settled on the Vietnamese refugees. The government was looking for sponsors. HIAS, the refugee organization that my grandfather co-founded, was one of the sponsoring agencies. I went home and announced to Jo and our sons that we were going to sponsor a family. They thought I was crazy. "When would we have the time?" But they soon agreed to do it. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1979, three scared teen-agers, the Truongs, arrived in their sandals to be greeted by a major Syracuse snowstorm. The trio lived with us for six months and one of them stayed with us for four years. Our relationship continues with two of them. We're surrogate parents. Much of their experience as refugees paralleled that of my own family generations earlier.

Syracuse is where my professional identity was formed. By the time I left, it was hard to go anywhere in central New York without running into someone I knew. I was ready for a move. However, opportunities to try out new approaches were drying up. Downsizing affected resources throughout the region. I sensed my job would disappear in a few years. In the mental health field, ideas of twenty years earlier were being passed off as new, and there were fewer adjunct teaching possibilities. Our willingness and hardiness to survive the long winters had decreased. When Jo lost her job and opportunities for her had dried up regionally, I encouraged her to do a national job search. I could now take early retirement and follow her if she found a job and location she liked. Jo took this as a cry for help to find a way for me to retreat gracefully. Jo was recruited for a federal job in Atlanta that began in July 1992, fell in love with life in the city and with the job. By Labor Day of 1992, Jo made it clear there was no turning back. I retired from the State of New York in April 1993. After downsizing possessions, I joined Jo in Atlanta in May.

### **Atlanta**

For the first time in my life, I moved without a school or job to go to. My initial identity was as a spouse. Nobody knew about my skills and achievements. It resembled my earlier move to Chicago. I was in transition and competing for positions or contracts as a non-Southern, older, Jewish male. My optimism turned to despair. I hadn't had to compete for work before—people would come to me. We had enough to live on if we were careful. My main breadwinner role was reduced to staying at home. I was

stuck—every lead was based on someone else's time frame. I played thousands of games of computer solitaire. It resembled bureaucratic work. I did lots of mind maps—some were reviews of the past—others tried to formulate strategies for the future. I turned my thinking on transitions into a workshop. I did not want to do work I had done before. No more mental illness; no more classroom teaching. In Syracuse, I had begun FreedMuse, a mechanism for me to do some consulting from the clinical sociological perspective. Now that I had time, I wanted to make it a successful independent enterprise. However, I needed to develop a network. At first, I didn't want to go through the process of building what I had in Syracuse. But then it became a necessity to move me out of my hermitage. I looked for an organization in which to become active and settled on the Atlanta Chapter for the American Society for Training and Development with its 1500 members. It became the centerpiece for my Atlanta network (dubbed "FreedNet" by one of my new friends). I also proposed and then founded the Study Circle, an award-winning professional practice area in ASTD. Even while the network grew, I continued to have trouble with the transition to new work. I would do occasional workshops, but it was hard to differentiate what I do from work of others looking for work in Atlanta — a magnet city.

Opportunities were slow in coming. But they came. In 1994-5, I used the clinical sociology approach at the testing laboratory of a Fortune 500 company. I worked with the executive director of a private social agency to come up with a new organizational structure. In 1996, as a volunteer, I was the training designer and a trainer for 7000 volunteers at the International Paralympic Games in Atlanta. This work won a special award from ASTD-Atlanta. Consulting work from a home-office has a different rhythm than the usual job.

- My current activities include being the Performance Effectiveness Consultant for The Fielding Institute's Professional Sociological Practice pilot program which Valerie Bentz and I co-founded. Among the mid-career students in his program, I see the next generation of sociological practitioners. My contribution to the workbook used by students is the section on practice. It uses a conceptual framework drawn from the varieties of work I've done in my career.
- being a Consultant as a contractor with The Continuous Learning Group, Inc. My team is working on the social redesign of a training delivery department for a Fortune 40 company.
- being the Senior Advisor for Strategic Creativity for the Sociological Practice Association. Out of a new strategic vision, I have taken the lead in creating new marketing materials and an internet part of the association called BRIDGE. I revisited being the program chair at the Great Scottsdale annual meeting of June 1997.



At this time, I am busy doing these exciting projects. Probably I will have moved to other activities by the time you read this. There will be ups and downs.

We are also pleased that two sons and two grandchildren are living in Atlanta (the other son, daughter-in-law and grandson are in Brooklyn). Today, I seldom view myself as a refugee or as retired. A new consulting colleague (the one who asked for the five minute autobiographical statement) recently wrote me, "I admire what you have done in recreating your life there [Atlanta] and your ability to establish a new future. Few could have accomplished the things you have achieved with the sense of humor and optimism you have retained."

When I retired from the Psychiatric Center, I quoted Helen Keller in my farewell address, "Life is a great adventure, or it is nothing." The great adventure continues . . . .

# Appendix: Resumés

## JONATHAN A. FREEDMAN

1175 Kingsley Circle

Atlanta GA 30324

404-315-0813 Telephone 404-325-5705 Fax

email: clinsoc@avana.net

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### EXPERIENCE

<b>President</b> FreedMuse	1988 to Present SYRACUSE NY & ATLANTA GA
<i>A Clinical Sociology consulting firm specializing in mentoring, group and organization development, and training</i>	
<b>Director of Education and Training</b> HUTCHINGS PSYCHIATRIC CENTER	1971 to 1993 SYRACUSE, NY
State of New York Psychiatric Facility providing a wide range of services to severely disabled persons	
<b>Special Assistant to the Executive Director for Organizational Development</b> HUTCHINGS PSYCHIATRIC CENTER	1990 to 1993 SYRACUSE, NY
<b>Assistant Professor</b> HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER - Department Of Psychiatry	1973 to 1993 SYRACUSE NY
<b>Adjunct Professor</b> SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY	1975 to 1993 SYRACUSE NY
Department of Sociology, Maxwell School and Special Education Division, School of Education	
<b>Adjunct Faculty</b> NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH, UPSTATE BRANCH	1982 to 1993
Health Services Admin., Graduate School of Management and Urban Professions	
<b>Lecturer</b> SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY School of Social Work	1966 to 1971 SYRACUSE NY

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### EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (Sociology)	BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY, WALTHAM, MA.	1973
Master of Arts (Sociology)	BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY, WALTHAM, MA.	1964
Bachelor of Arts (Social Psychology)	WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, MIDDLETOWN, CT.	1957

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### SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

• <b>Certified Clinical Sociologist</b>	Sociological Practice Association	1984 to Present
• <b>CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY</b>	(1st modern text in Clinical Sociology co-author Barry Glassner)	1979
• <b>Distinguished Career in Sociological Practice Award</b>	Sociological Practice Association.	1989
• <b>Teacher of the Year</b>	University College, Syracuse University	1984
• <b>CHOICEPOINT</b>	(Curriculum for adolescents to aid in making choices) Institute For Human Evolution, Salem MA	1988
• <b>CHOOSE HEALTH</b>	(Curriculum for adults to aid in making health lifestyle choices) FreedMuse, Syracuse NY	1992
Research studies, journal articles, chapters in books, training manuals, television productions (titles on request)		
• <b>WHO'S WHO IN THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST</b>		1994-6
• <b>WHO'S WHO IN MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE</b>		1997-8
• <b>ASTD Atlanta Chapter. Co-Chair, Study Circle Professional Practice Area</b>		1994 to Present
• <b>Professional Practice Area Achievement Awards</b>		1995, 1996
Dugan Laird Award for Exceptional Project (Paralympic Training)		
• <b>Cabot Applications Development Lab Clinical Sociology and Organization Development Consultant</b>		1995
• <b>Atlanta Paralympic Games Co-designed and delivered volunteer training for thousands of volunteers</b>		1996
• <b>Sociological Practice Association President's Award</b>		1997
• <b>The Fielding Institute Professional Sociological Practice Program Co-Founder</b>		1997

## **Jonathan A. Freedman**

### **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities**

*A resume presents an overview of employment, education, and achievement. However, a person is more than the measure of these yardsticks. Here, I present those qualities by which I am known to those with whom I have worked.*

#### **Leader/Manager**

who creates structures that enhance staff empowerment, commitment, and productivity to an organization. He frequently is called upon to troubleshoot in difficult situations. Others state "he makes the impossible possible." He has remained effective in periods of growth, stabilization, and downsizing. The training staff he formerly led has maintained high productivity for many years regardless of working conditions.

#### **Facilitator for Groups and Organizations**

specializing in developing agreement in difficult groups with complex missions. For example, he facilitated a group that developed a state-wide plan for the future of state psychiatric centers. Another effort involved major providers of mental health services in a county to agree on a cooperative vision for the future.

#### **Workshop Leader and Teacher**

Expert communicator to many audiences. These include: professionals, paraprofessionals, business, academics, general public, and special populations, including senior citizens, students, prison staff and inmates. He conducts workshops in the areas of stress management, leadership, dealing with difficult people, total quality management, mental illness, organizational change, downsizing, team building, and sociological topics. He teaches credit classes in sociology, psychiatry, hospital administration, and counseling.

#### **Training and Development Director**

who has designed, developed, delivered, and evaluated many training programs. Emphasis has been on training for managers, trainers, professionals and paraprofessionals, helping adolescents to make wise choices, and wellness.

#### **Innovator and Pioneer**

at the cutting edge of possibilities in several fields: wellness, quality improvement, clinical sociology, diversity, curriculum development, leadership for organizational change.

#### **Counselor**

called upon to develop plans or deliver treatment with special abilities with difficult clients. Links individual's recovery with group, organizational, or community goals. He has mentored many persons.

#### **Consultant**

specializing in strategies that solve difficult problems for groups, organizations, and communities. Uses Clinical Sociology to link social strategies to an individual's goals.

#### **Special Skills**

Desktop publishing, simple video editing, interviewing, internet, visionary planning.

#### **Award Winner**

Teacher of the Year, University College, Syracuse University  
Distinguished Career in Sociological Practice, Sociological Practice Association  
Dugan Laird Award for an exceptional project, American Society for Training and Development-Greater Atlanta Chapter.

#### **Key Knowledge Areas**

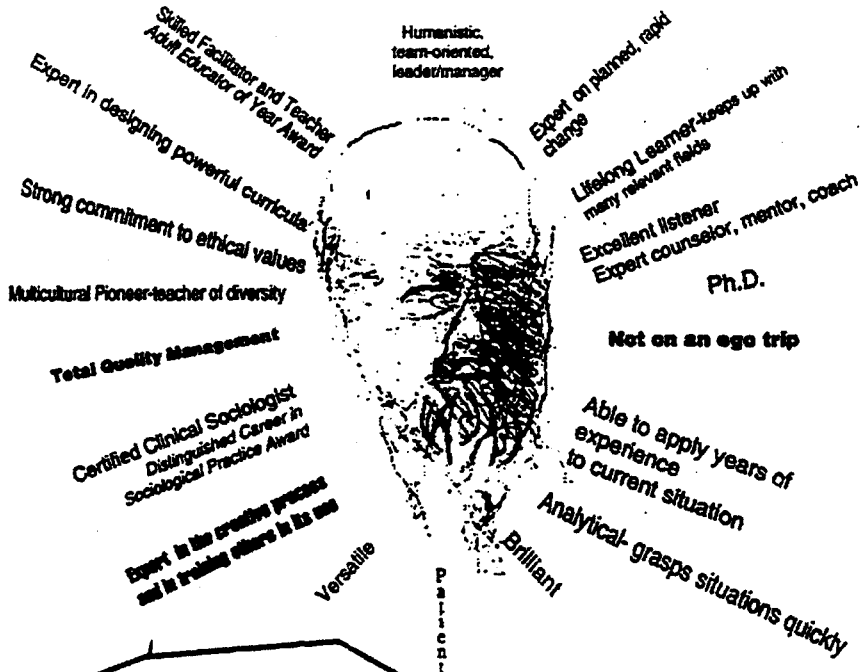
clinical sociology, group and organizational development, social problems, mental illness, cross-cultural counseling, continuous quality improvement, organizational development, cultural change, training, and wellness.

#### **Key Personal Qualities**

loyal, optimistic, energetic, creative, empathic, good listener, full of ideas, life-long learner who loves to teach. He has a good conceptual mind reinforced by years of practical experience.

# Jonathan A. Freedman

An exceptional repertoire of talents in training, development,  
assessment of personal, organizational, and social issues,  
intervention strategies, and general wisdom



**What can I do for you?**  
I thrive on challenges!

**FreedMuse**  
1175 Kingsley Circle  
Atlanta GA 30324-3221  
404-315-0813

A distinguished past is prologue to exciting  
achievements in the future \*

\* a more traditional resume is available on request